

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 077945
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN:WBRUBECK/MDRAPER:JFC

APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY

NSC - W. QUANDT

S/S-O RCAS/RODALE

NEA - MR. AHERION

NEA - MR. SAUNDERS

IO - GERALD HELMAN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS NIACT IMMEDIATE

WHITE HOUSE

SECRET STATE 077945

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PPDC, SY, US, LE, MOPS, PEPR, IS

SUBJECT: MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT CARTER TO ASSAD--THE
BEGIN VISIT AND SOUTH LEBANON

1. WE HOPE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO DELIVER PERSONALLY TO
ASSAD THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT CARTER AND CAN
USE THE OCCASION TO DISCUSS WITH HIM MORE FULLY THE BEGIN
VISIT AND THE SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON. WE WANT NOT ONLY
TO KEEP THE DIALOGUE WITH ASSAD GOING ON THE PEACE PROCESS.
WE WANT TO GET THE BEST POSSIBLE SENSE OF ASSAD'S PRESENT
THINKING AND OF WHAT COOPERATION WE CAN HOPE FOR FROM HIM
IN SOUTH LEBANON WHERE HIS ROLE IS OBVIOUSLY CRUCIAL.

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2. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S MESSAGE:
BEGIN TEXT:

HIS EXCELLENCY
LIEUTENANT GENERAL HAFEZ AL-ASSAD,
PRESIDENT OF THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC,

DAMASCUS

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I CONSIDER IT IMPORTANT AT THIS CRITICAL POINT IN THE PEACE NEGOTIATING PROCESS TO GIVE YOU A REPORT ON PRIME MINISTER BEGIN'S VISIT AND MY ASSESSMENT OF

THE OUTLOOK FOR FURTHER PROGRESS. WE HAD TWO DAYS OF VERY FRANK AND DETAILED TALKS HERE. I BELIEVE MR. BEGIN WENT HOME WITH A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE U.S. POSITION ON THE ISSUES AND OF WHAT IS NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE A TRUE AND COMPREHENSIVE PEACE SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THESE PAST MONTHS OF NEGOTIATIONS HAVE, I THINK, BEEN VERY USEFUL IN CLARIFYING POSITIONS AND IN BRINGING THE DISCUSSION DOWN TO A REAL ENGAGEMENT WITH THE BASIC PROBLEM THAT MUST BE SOLVED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE. THEY MADE POSSIBLE IN THIS WEEK'S MEETINGS WITH MR. BEGIN THE MOST THOROUGH AND CANDID ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM THAT I HAVE YET HAD WITH HIM.

MR. BEGIN NOW UNDERSTANDS FULLY THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE SETTLEMENT: THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES APPLIES TO ALL FRONTS AND THAT THERE MUST BE A JUST SOLUTION TO THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IN ALL ITS ASPECTS, INCLUDING THE RIGHT OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DETERMINATION OF THEIR OWN FUTURE. IT WAS ALSO

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MADE CLEAR TO HIM THAT THERE MUST BE AN END TO ISRAELI SETTLEMENT ACTIVITIES IF NEGOTIATIONS ARE TO BE SUCCESSFUL. I URGED THAT ISRAEL CLEARLY ACCEPT THESE UNDERSTANDINGS IN ORDER TO OPEN THE WAY TO BROAD AND DETAILED NEGOTIATIONS AND A REAL RESOLUTION OF THE ISSUES.

THERE WERE, I MUST TELL YOU FRANKLY, SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN US ON THESE FUNDAMENTAL MATTERS. MR. BEGIN CONTINUES TO ARGUE THAT RESOLUTION 242 DOES NOT REQUIRE WITHDRAWAL ON ALL FRONTS; AND HE IS DEEPLY CONCERNED BY THE PROSPECT THAT WITHDRAWAL ON THE WEST BANK HOLDS THE THREAT OF AN INDEPENDENT, HOSTILE STATE THERE. NEVERTHELESS, I BELIEVE THAT HE HAS GONE HOME AWARE THAT ISRAEL MUST RE-EXAMINE ITS POSITIONS AND ADDRESS THESE BASIC ISSUES IF THERE IS TO BE A PEACE SETTLEMENT. THIS WEEK'S TALKS WERE A NECESSARY AND IMPORTANT STEP IN THE PEACE PROCESS.

THERE IS NOW TAKING PLACE IN ISRAEL A VERY SERIOUS AND SIGNIFICANT DEBATE ON THESE MATTERS. THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, AS NEVER BEFORE, ARE GOING THROUGH THE POLITICAL RE-THINKING THAT IS ESSENTIAL TO CLEAR THE WAY FOR SUCCESS-

FUL NEGOTIATIONS.

WE WILL CONTINUE OUR EFFORT TO GET AGREEMENT ON THE BASIC PRINCIPLES THAT MUST BE THE BASIS FOR NEGOTIATIONS. I BELIEVE IT MUST BE CLEAR NOW TO EVERYONE THAT THE PROCESS TO WHICH WE ARE COMMITTED IS ADDRESSED TO A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE AND THAT AMONG ITS CENTRAL GOALS ARE A SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE PALESTINIANS AND OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. WE WILL REMAIN FIRM IN OUR COMMITMENT TO THESE GOALS. WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO HELP THE PARTIES TO THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT FIND A BASIS FOR RESOLVING THEIR DIFFERENCES. I AM MORE THAN EVER CONVINCED, AFTER THE EXPERIENCE OF THESE PAST FEW MONTHS, THAT THE EFFORT WE ARE

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ENGAGED IN CAN LEAD TO THE KIND OF MIDDLE EAST SOLUTION THAT YOU AND I SOUGHT IN OUR ORIGINAL EFFORTS FOR A COMPREHENSIVE NEGOTIATION AT GENEVA.

I SHOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS ALSO MY PERSONAL ADMIRATION FOR THE WISDOM, RESTRAINT, AND LEADERSHIP YOU HAVE CONTRIBUTED IN THE CURRENT EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE CRISIS IN SOUTH LEBANON. YOUR GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT AND THE ACTIVITY OF YOUR AMBASSADOR IN NEW YORK WERE EXTREMELY HELPFUL IN THE CRITICAL TASK OF GETTING A SATISFACTORY SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION. I BELIEVE NOW THAT WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE WE MUST NOW TURN TO CREATING CONDITIONS IN WHICH THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT CAN RESTORE ITS AUTHORITY IN THE SOUTH. THIS WILL MAKE POSSIBLE THE RETURN OF MANY THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO HAD BEEN FORCED TO FLEE THE FIGHTING, NOT ONLY IN RECENT DAYS, BUT OVER THE MONTHS PAST. SYRIA HAS BEEN PLAYING A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN SUPPORT OF THESE GOALS.

I UNDERSTAND THAT THE ISRAELI FORCES HAVE NOW BEGUN THEIR INITIAL WITHDRAWALS. THIS IS A STEP OF GREAT IMPORTANCE, BUT THERE WILL STILL REMAIN A MAJOR TASK OF ESTABLISHING PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE SOUTH IN WHICH YOU AND YOUR GOVERNMENT HAVE A VERY IMPORTANT PART TO PLAY. I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL COOPERATE FULLY WITH THE UNITED NATIONS, WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON AND WITH YOUR OWN EFFORTS TO RESTORE PEACE AND BRING AN END TO THE LONG SUFFERING OF THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH LEBANON. WITH WARM GOOD WISHES. STNCERELY, JIMMY CARTER. END TEXT.

3. IN DELIVERING THE ABOVE MESSAGE YOU SHOULD DRAW ON ATHERTON'S BACKGROUNDER AND DEPARTMENT'S BRIEFING GUIDANCE (SEPTELS) AS YOU SEE FIT TO GIVE ASSAD FURTHER DETAIL ON

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4. YOU SHOULD USE YOUR OWN DISCRETION AS TO HOW FAR YOU CAN GO WITH ASSAD ON SOUTH LEBANON BOTH ON DRAWING HIM OUT ON HIS VIEWS AND SYRIAN INTENTIONS AND IN SEEKING SYRIAN COOPERATION. TO THE EXTENT YOU CAN DO SO, WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO COVER THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- WE WERE HIGHLY GRATIFIED WITH THE MARCH 24 COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCE MAKING CLEAR THAT RE-

INFORCEMENTS OF MEN AND MILITARY EQUIPMENT WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED INTO LEBANON. THIS WAS AN ESSENTIAL STEP TO PREVENT MATTERS FROM BECOMING UNCONTROLLABLE, BUT WE ADMIRE SYRIAN DECISIVENESS IN TAKING THIS ACTION SO PROMPTLY IN THE TEETH OF EXPECTED SHARP CRITICISM FROM CERTAIN OTHER ARAB STATES AND THE PALESTINIANS GENERALLY.

-- IT IS IMPORTANT TO OUR COMMON GOALS IN LEBANON THAT THE PALESTINIANS COOPERATE WITH AND OFFER NO RESISTANCE TO UNIFIL IN THE EXERCISE OF ITS MANDATE, AND WILL CONTINUE TO OBSERVE THE CEASEFIRE. WE ASSUME THAT SYRIA WILL BE MAKING EFFORTS TO ASSURE THAT THIS HAPPENS AND WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN WHAT STEPS WILL BE CARRIED OUT.

-- WE PRESUME IN THE FIRST INSTANCE THAT CONTROL OF RE-INFORCEMENTS WOULD APPLY TO THE MOVEMENT OF IRAQI "VOLUNTEERS" AND MILITARY SUPPLIES. WILL THIS ALSO APPLY TO AIRCRAFT COMING FROM IRAQ OR POSSIBLY LIBYA? WILL THEY BE ALLOWED TO UNLOAD? WILL MOVEMENTS BY SEA BE STOPPED IN AREAS UNDER ADF CONTROL?

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-- WE ARE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE LARGE PALESTINIAN ARMED PRESENCE IN TYRE AND WOULD APPRECIATE HIS IDEAS ON HOW UNIFIL MIGHT DEAL WITH IT.

-- ASK IN WHAT WAY THE UNITED STATES COULD BE HELPFUL IN MOVES TO STABILIZE THE SITUATION THROUGHOUT LEBANON. DESCRIBE THE EFFORTS EMBASSY BEIRUT HAS MADE, NOT ONLY WITH THE GOVERNMENT LEADERS, BUT ALSO WITH KEY PERSONALITIES OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT.

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APPROVED BY: IO/UNA:AFHOLLOWAY
S/S-O:JTHYDEN
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FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE SENT ACTION DAMASCUS INFO WHITE HOUSE
26 MAR 78

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UNQUOTE VANCE

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 26 mar 1978
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Subject: MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT CARTER TO ASSAD--TE BEGIN VISIT AND SOUTH LEBANON
TAGS: PPDC, MOPS, PEPR, PBOR, SY, US, LE, IS, XF, (CARTER, JIMMY), (ASSAD, HAFIZ), (BEGIN, MENACHEM)
To: DAMASCUS WHITE HOUSE
Type: TE
vdkgvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c3cb12bd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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